

A NEW ALOE FROM MADAGASCAR

By G. W. REYNOLDS.

(With Plate I.)

Aloe Descoingsii Reynolds. Species nova, affinis *A. jucundae* Reynolds, pedunculo graciliore, inflorescentia brevior, racemo capitato, floribus rubris brevioribus differt.

Planta parva, sobolifera, mox caespitosa.

Folia ca. 8—10, dense rosulata, ovato-attenuata, 30 mm. longa, 15 mm. lata, patentia vel recurvula; *supra* viridula, parce tuberculato-maculata; *subtus* convexa; marginibus dentibus cartilagineis albidis 1 mm. longis, 1—1.5 mm. distantibus armata.

Inflorescentia simplex, 12—15 cm. alta. *Racemus* capitatus, 12 mm. longus, 25 mm. diam., ca. 10-floribus.

Pedunculus gracilis, 1—1.5 mm. diam., *Bractae* ovato-acutae, 2 mm. longae, 1 mm. latae. *Pedicelli* 5 mm. longi.

Perianthium coccineum, cylindricum, 7—8 mm. longum; *segmenta exteriora* per 2 mm. libera. *Antherae* non exsertae. *Stigma* demum non exserta. *Ovarium* 1.5 mm. longum, 1.5 diametro. (Plate I.)

MADAGASCAR. Tulear Province: top of limestone cliff near Anjamala Village, about 46 km. N-E of Tulear, 350 m. alt., ca. 44° E., 23° 11' S., cult. Tananarive, fl. 15 June 1957, Descoings 2440! holotype (TAN), isotype (PRE); cult. Johannesburg et Pretoria, fl. Aug. 1957, Descoings et Reynolds 8304, (PRE).

Our new species was discovered in 1956 by Mr. B. Descoings (Botanist at the Institut Recherche Scientifique de Madagascar, Tsimbazaza, Tananarive) about 1 km. beyond Anjamala Village, which village is about 45 km. north-east of Tulear on the south-eastern side of the Fiherenana River.

Mr. Descoings found large numbers of plants on the top of a limestone cliff in scanty soil facing south. This locality is c. 44° E., 23° 11' E., at c. 350 m. alt.

Plants collected by Mr. Descoings flowered in Tsimbazaza in April and June 1957, while some of those sent to me flowered in Johannesburg and Pretoria in August 1957, when the description was completed.

I am happy to name this charming little species after the discoverer, Mr. Descoings, who accompanied me throughout Madagascar investigating the Aloes in 1955, and to whom I am greatly indebted for much assistance in many directions.

A. Descouingsii is a most distinctive species with rosettes of leaves only 5—6 cm. across, a very slender simple inflorescence 12—15 cm. high, and red flowers only 8—10 mm. long in a capitate raceme.

In habit of growth rosettes and leaf characters, *A. Descouingsii* bears a very striking resemblance to *A. jucunda* Reynolds on Gaan Libah, western end of the Golis Range, between Hargeisa and Sheikh, in Somaliland Protectorate, but the latter has a thicker peduncle, a taller inflorescence 20—30 cm. high, and lax racemes of rose-pink cylindric flowers 24 mm. long. (Another closely allied new species with distichous leaves, and very small white flowers, collected by Mr. Descouings near Ambato-finandrahana, will be described when flowers are available.)

DESCRIPTION. *Plant* succulent, suckering freely and forming dense groups.

Stem none or very short.

Leaves about 8—10, densely rosulate, ovate-attenuate, up to 30 mm. long, 15 mm. broad at base, spreading to recurved; *upper surface* flat low down, canaliculate upwards, rough to the touch, dull green with numerous dull white tubercular excrescences throughout giving a white-spotted effect; *lower surface* rounded, similar to upper surface in colour and tubercular excrescences; *margins* somewhat involute, armed with firm white cartilaginous deltoid teeth that are 1 mm. long, 1—1.5 mm. apart low down, smaller upwards, obsolescent near apex.

Inflorescence simple, 12—15 cm. tall.

Peduncle 1.5 mm. thick near base, 1 mm. below the raceme, brown with a slight bloom, clothed with up to 10 sterile-bracts that are amplexicaul, narrowly deltoid, about 6 mm. long, 2 mm. broad at base.

Raceme capitate, about 10-flowered, the pedicellate portion 12 mm. long, 25 mm. diam., youngest buds obliquely spreading to horizontally disposed, open flowers nutant.

Bracts ovate-acute, 2 mm. long, 1 mm. broad, thin, scarious, white, 1-nerved.

Pedicels slender, 5 mm. long, 1 mm. thick.

Perianth scarlet, paler to slightly orange at mouth, cylindric, 7—8 mm. long, basally flat and shortly stipitate, 4 mm. diam. across the ovary, narrowing to 3 mm. at the mouth; *outer segments* free for 2 mm. 3-nerved, the apices subacute, slightly spreading; *inner segments* broader than the outer, with more obtuse more spreading apices.

Filaments filiform, the 3 inner narrower and lengthening before the 3 outer with their *anthers* not exerted.

Stigma not exerted.

Ovary green, 1.5 mm. long, 1 mm. diam.

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Mr. B. Descoings for sending several plants of this species to me and also of another new species which is awaiting description, and for much other assistance.

Dr. R. A. Dyer, Chief, Division of Botany, Pretoria, for the facilities of the National Herbarium, and for photographing my plants while I was away.



Plate I. *Aloe Descoingsii* Reynolds.

Plant 1/1, from the top of a limestone cliff near Anjamala Village,
46 km. NE of Tulear, Madagascar, cult. Johannesburg, fl. August 1957.

Height 13 cm.

Photo: By courtesy Dr. R. A. Dyer, Chief, Division of Botany, Pretoria.